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**speak out**

**Good grief**

TO THE EDITOR:

OK, I know grief can cause people to do things they later can regret. Christ, I've been known to eat a pint or two of Ben & Jerry's in one grief-soaked minute, but there comes a time when we have to say enough is enough.

So there I am watching the season opener of *The West Wing*—commercial time, mute. But wait a minute, there's Judy Shepard, and she's pumping up Gordon Smith for Senate—unmute, unmute.

In her grief, she is calling up the spirit of her murdered son, Matthew, as someone who would have liked Gordon Smith and would have voted for him. Now I might be treading on dangerous ground, but I found Judy and her sincere pitch misguided and appalling—the same way I feel when I see those fucking Apple commercials featuring Ghandi, Joan Baez and John Lennon. It's just wrong.

And voting for Gordon Smith is wrong. Oh, sure, he supported hate crimes legislation, but look at his total record—and don't get stuck in identity politics.

He sucks when it comes to workers rights, he sucks when it comes to rights for farmworkers, he sucks on a lot of issues that affect women and queers. So, fuck, let the dead vote for Gordon, but those of us who are alive should think carefully before supporting him.

JACK DANGER  
Portland

**Play fair**

TO THE EDITOR:

Regarding the Oct. 3 demonstration against Gordon Smith, I feel Basic Rights Oregon made a huge mistake.

**transitions**

**Alexander Goodrum, 1960-2002**

Alexander John "Bear" Goodrum, 41, committed suicide Sept. 28 in Tucson, Ariz. He was a widely admired activist who played a pivotal role in advocating for trans equality.

He was a bisexual, disabled, African American, female-to-male person who worked with the various communities in an effort to inform and educate. He is recognized for his widely published paper *Gender Identity 101: A Transgender Primer*.

Goodrum founded and directed TGNNet Arizona, a grassroots advocacy organization. Its most recent notable accomplishment was a groundbreaking program to help employers statewide better understand the issues of gender-variant workers and applicants.

"We are greatly saddened by the death of...Goodrum, who was a true leader and an inspiration to those fighting for the equality of transgender Americans," said Elizabeth Birch, Human Rights Campaign executive director. "While Goodrum is no longer with us, his many contributions and enduring legacy survive."

A memorial service will be held Oct. 5 in Tucson. For more information send e-mail to IRememberBear@transcribes.org. [M]



To say he is "using" the Matthew Shepard case to his advantage is unfair, to say the least. Answer me this: Have not gay lobbyists used the Shepard case to their advantage every chance they get?!

Such a display of hostility by the gay community toward a would-be ally—and a powerful one at that—could very well cost us dearly. In case you hadn't noticed, the current administration is not exactly supportive of the GLBT community, nor is there an abundance of Republican senators eager to champion our cause. As Republicans go, Smith has proven to be remarkably fair-minded.

BRO would do well to remember that without our straight allies we surely would not live in as accepting and tolerant a society as we do today.

ANNIE OTIS  
Miss Gay Pride 2002

**Conspiracy theory**

TO THE EDITOR:

I'm responding to a letter by Thomas Kraemer printed in your Sept. 6 issue titled "Denying AIDS." I feel what we deny most, as a queer community, is sex and drug addiction, and honest discourse about those subjects would benefit us more than condemning those who dare to look into the science behind HIV and AIDS.

Whether or not the connection from HIV to AIDS is clear (which it is not, because not one human sample of isolated HIV ever has been recovered from any AIDS patient), what is clear is that recreational drugs (such as poppers, ecstasy, cocaine and heroin) and semen in the bloodstream (especially multiple, differing semen) are very damaging to the immune system. AIDS means acquired immune deficiency syndrome; it is not one disease but a collection of 29 known diseases that surface when the immune system collapses. The most important thing gay men can do is to protect and support their immune system.

Kraemer is rightfully and compassionately concerned that men who engage in bareback sex are in danger. It is interesting the specifics never are discussed, and both partners of bareback sex are implied to be in danger.

After reading a hundred sexual transmission studies, I have concluded that only the receptive partner is in danger and that he only is in danger if he has many partners. The immune system becomes accustomed to one set of genetic material, but it is overloaded with differing semen.

Do you think there might be a reason why 90 percent of books on AIDS at Borders "deny" the religious tenet that HIV causes AIDS? Do you think it might be because a lot of evidence out there shows HIV does not cause AIDS or, at the very least, it should be reappraised or not be considered to be the sole cause?

These "conspiracy theories" and "denialists" are Nobel Prize-winning laureates and virology experts who pioneered retrovirus science. I encourage all *Just Out* readers to look into the subject themselves, including Kraemer's "fact-sheet" supplied by the National Institutes of Health, which receives half of its income from the patent on the HIV test.

It was an NIH doctor who "discovered" HIV, which is why the NIH gets the royalties. A Senate Ethics Committee convicted this man, Robert Gallo, of scientific misconduct because he "fabricated and falsified data," yet it is the sole reference for "HIV causes AIDS." That sounds more like a conspiracy to me.

It will take decades for governmental AIDS infrastructures ever to acknowledge or allow the free discourse of scientific information; you have to look for it. In the meantime, let's be accountable and take a look at sex and drug addiction in the GLBT community.

KIM STEPHENSON  
Portland